

Tuberculosis

FACT SHEET

What is Tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis (TB) is a serious disease caused by mycobacteria tuberculosis. TB disease is usually found in the lungs, but may cause disease in any part of the body. TB disease is the leading cause of death in the world

How is TB disease spread?

TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The bacteria get into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, talks or sings. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected. TB is NOT spread by dishes, drinking glasses, clothing or touching a person with the disease.

What are the symptoms of TB?

General symptoms may include fatigue, weight loss, fever, chills, and night sweats. Symptoms of TB of the lungs may include cough chest pain, and/or coughing up blood. Other symptoms depend would correspond with the affected part of the body.

Who gets TB?

Anyone who has been around someone with TB and become infected are at increased risk of developing active TB disease. Once infected some people are at higher risk of developing active TB disease. Those at higher risk include: People who have close contact with someone who has active TB, homeless people, foreign-born people from countries where there is a high incidence of TB, people who live in congregate living (nursing home, jails, etc), alcoholics and IV drug users, HIV infected people, and people with certain medical conditions.

How long is a person with TB disease contagious?

People with TB disease are considered noncontagious after they have 3 negative smear from sputum, been on treatment for at least 2 weeks, and are clinically improving. Person with active TB should be in TB isolation until the 3 measures have been met, either at home or in a hospital setting. If it is necessary for the patient to be out while still contagious the patient should wear a mask.

What is the treatment for TB?

People with active TB are usually treated with Isoniazid, Rifampin, Pyrazinamide, and Ethambutol. Complete information can be found in the Core Curriculum on Tuberculosis, and the joint statement of the American Thoracic Society/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Infectious Disease Society of America: Treatment of Tuberculosis. These can be accessed through www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Section for Communicable Disease Prevention
Phone: (866) 628-9891 or (573) 751-6113